

## **ABSTRACT**

An appropriately sited retail location can turn a business into a veritable cash machine for the owner. Siting a store location has financial implications for store owners, banks, real estate professionals, store employees and company shareholders, all of whom are impacted by the success or failure of a store. Determining catchment population -- the population within a store site's actual or potential trade area -- is essential for good retail site suitability analysis. An accurate calculation of a store's catchment population depends on the method of defining a store's trade area and the accuracy and the precision of population data.

This study explored how concentrating aggregated census population into existing developed residential areas affects the results of trade area analyses likely to be used in retail real estate marketing and decision making. Different methods of defining trade areas were also used to explore how the differing trade area outcomes affected results of analyses used for retail real estate decision making. It also seeks to show how different store sites with different population densities ranging from very dense areas in suburban areas to areas bordering rural areas affect population aggregations. Results of these analyses showed only small changes in catchment population and demographics when concentrated population areas were used in calculations as opposed to census aggregates. Conversely using different distance measures for trade area creation resulted in large differences in catchment population which should be taken into consideration for analysis and marketing moving forward.